Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Office of Title I Academic Support

Districts in Improvement Year 3

Workbook

March 2009

Developed with assistance from
Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center at Learning Point Associates

Contents

Online Appendix Contents

Section I: The No Child Left Behind Act

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson established the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the federal law regarding public schools. This law included the creation of the Title I program for students of poverty. Since that time, subsequent presidents supplemented, redesigned, and extended the law, often under a new name. For example, President Bill Clinton authorized ESEA as the Improving America's Schools Act. President George W. Bush redesigned the law as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and framed it around four pillars:

- Accountability for results
- Expanded parental options
- Doing what works based on scientific research
- Expanded local control; flexibility

Under NCLB, schools and schools districts are held accountable for student achievement. When achievement levels are not met, the districts are placed into one of several levels of improvement status. Each state department of education has developed a unique process for measuring student achievement and for determining the acceptable improvement rates.

Indiana's Terminology for Determining District Improvement

Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) developed a statistical process for determining student achievement rates at both the school and school district levels. The process includes several terms specific to Indiana's implementation of NCLB.

Safe Harbor

Safe harbor is a special provision that is achieved when the number of students not meeting performance targets is reduced by 10 percent (being "in safe harbor") and when attendance and graduation rate targets are met within one or more grade spans.

Confidence Interval

The confidence interval is the performance target for each group of students at a school. For greater statistical accuracy, the confidence interval fluctuates depending on the number of students in each group.

Participation Rate

The requirement is that at least 95 percent of students in each student group must participate in the statewide assessment to make adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Content Exclusion

Content exclusion means that the level of improvement status (e.g., in improvement, in corrective action) does not advance if the content area (English/language arts or mathematics) in which the students do not make AYP is different from one year to the next.

	Pupils	English		English Conf Int	Math		Math Conf Int	Other Indicator '04	Other Indicator '05		Safe Harbor Engl	Safe Harbor Math	Safe Harbor Other	95% Part. Lang	95% Part. Math
8800 XYZ School Corporation *															
Overall, Elementary	2217	71.8		63.4	71.1		61.9								
Overall, Middle School	2177	66.7		63.3	69.7		61.9								
Overall, High School	1382	62.0	*	62.7	64.1		61.3	93.59	93.53	*	N		N		
Black, Elementary	250	58.0	*	58.7	52.2	*	57.2				N	N	Y		
Black, Middle School	292	49.0	*	59.2	47.9	*	57.8				Y	N	Y		
Black, High School	161	43.5	*	57.0	38.2	*	55.5	93.86	93.08		Y	Y	N		
Hispanic, Elementary	78	41.0	*	53.2	47.4	*	51.7				N	N	Y		
Hispanic, Middle School	92	42.4	*	54.2	50.5	*	52.7				N	Y	Y		
Hispanic, High School	43	32.6	*	48.8	45.2	*	47.3				N	N	Y		
White, Elementary	1744	75.1		63.1	75.1		61.6								
White, Middle School	1668	71.4		63.0	75.0		61.6								
White, High School	1099	65.9		62.4	68.8		60.9								
Free Lunch, Elementary	951	61.2	*	62.1	62.6		60.7				Y		Y		
Free Lunch, Middle School	907	53.4	*	62.0	55.9	*	60.6		94.17		Y	Y	N		
Free Lunch, High School	475	47.4	*	60.6	49.8	*	59.2		91.65		N	Y	N	94.0%*	
Limited Eng, Elementary	39	12.8	*	48.0	28.2	*	46.4				N	N	Y		
Limited Eng, Middle School	36	16.7	*	47.3	27.8	*	45.7				N	N	Y	< 40 Enr	
Limited Eng, High School	31	12.9	*	45.8	22.6	*	44.2				Y	N	Y	< 40 Enr	
Special Ed, Elementary	365	37.5	*	59.9	46.2	*	58.5				N	N	Y		
Special Ed, Middle School	334	26.9	*	59.6	34.4	*	58.2				N	N	Y		
Special Ed, High School	244	18.9	*	58.6	26.0	*	57.2		91.55		N	Y	N	93.6%*	93.6%*
	AYP History: 2002=N, 2003=N, 2004=N														
	Title 1 AYP History: 2002=Y,2003=N,2004=N,Title 1 Corporation Improvement=Year 1														

Activity#1: Did Our District Make AYP?

➲ *Directions:* Using your district's AYP Grade Span Report, circle the student groups that did not meet AYP (see Table 1). How does a district not meet AYP?

1. By not meeting one or more student performance targets (or, safe harbor) for student subgroups in all three grade spans (elementary, middle, and high school), and/or
2. By not meeting 95 percent participation rate for students in all three grade spans with 40 or more students, and/or
3. By not meeting attendance rate targets for students in all three grade spans.

➢ *Note:* If this year's AYP Grade Span Reports are not yet available, using last year's data should serve as a good indication of the upcoming results.

Table 1. Our Student Groups Not Meeting AYP

Student Groups	**Elementary**		**Middle School**		**High School**	
Black	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
Hispanic	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
White	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
Limited English	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
Special Education	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics	E/LA	Mathematics
Participation	Met	Did not meet	Met	Did not meet	Met	Did not meet
Attendance	Met	Did not meet	Met	Did not meet	Met	Did not meet

➲*Directions:* Under Indiana's Title I Differentiated Accountability Model, schools are identified according to those with greatest needs: focused and comprehensive. List your corresponding schools below:

Our focused schools:

Our comprehensive schools:

Activity #2: What Does NCLB Require If a District Does Not Make AYP?

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) developed guidelines for state departments of education, local education agencies (LEAs) and districts, and schools as related to school and district improvement. *LEA and School Improvement: Non-Regulatory Guidance* (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) is crucial to understanding the requirements and processes of improvement. Therefore, a copy is provided to you today.

The document follows a question-and-answer format with initial sections containing school improvement and restructuring, followed by LEA improvement and LEA corrective action.

➲ *Directions:* Divide the following pages in the document (see Table 2) among team members. Read the assigned pages to answer the questions. Discuss the answers and their implications for your district with the whole team. "Code" refers to the letter-number reference, e.g., J–3, in the document.

Table 2. Requirements According to Nonregulatory Guidance

Pages 42–46—Question	Code	Answer	How Does This Affect or Impact Our District?
1. Which districts fall into improvement status?			
2. Why is it possible for a district to be in improvement status even though it has no schools in improvement? Case Study: District A has four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school, none of which is in school improvement. Is it possible for the district to be in improvement?			
3a. What actions must IDOE, Title I take regarding notification? 3b. What actions must your district take regarding notification? 3c. How will parents be notified that the district is in improvement?			

Pages 46–47—Question	Code	Answer	How Does This Affect or Impact Our District?
4. What is the purpose of your improvement plan?			
5. What must your plan include? Case Study: District B has a district strategic plan. Can it serve as the LEA improvement plan?			
6. When must your plan be implemented?			
Pages 47–48—Question	**Code**	**Answer**	**How Does This Affect or Impact Our District?**
7. How will you pay for high-quality professional development? Case Study: District C's high school does not receive Title I funding. Yet, the teachers need the same professional development that the Title I elementary schools are receiving. Is it appropriate to use Title I funds for the training of the high school teachers?			
8. What must the IDOE, Title I do to support your district?			
9. How does your district exit from improvement status?			
Page 49—Question	**Code**	**Answer**	**How Does This Affect or Impact Our District?**
10. What actions must the IDOE take for LEAs in Year 3 of improvement/ corrective action?			

NCLB: Requirements of Districts in Improvement and Corrective Action

Table 3 provides an overview of the LEA requirements for each year in improvement. Notice that in Year 3, the district begins a new process of mapping and aligning its English/language arts and/or mathematics curriculum.

Table 3. LEA Requirements for Each Year in Improvement

District Responsibilities	**Year 1 in Improvement**	**Year 2 in Improvement**	**Year 3 in Improvement** (in corrective action)	**Year 4 and Beyond** (in corrective action)
LEA Improvement/ Action Plan	✓ Develop new plan	✓ Review previous year's plan and make changes as needed	✓ Revise previous year's plan with emphasis on curriculum	✓ Revise previous year's plan with continued emphasis on curriculum
10% Title I funds for professional development, generally related to curriculum, instruction, formative assessments	✓	✓	✓	✓
Notify parents and public	✓	✓	✓	✓
Map, align, and implement new or revised English/language arts and/or mathematics curriculum developed with all schools and teacher participating			✓	✓

- *Discussion:* Consider which stakeholders in the district, schools, and community need to understand the requirements and steps of being a district in improvement. Discuss how and when to share this information with various stakeholders.

Section II: Becoming a High-Performing District

Components of High-Performing School Districts: The Research and Best Practices

What is meant by the phrase "high-performing school district"? Who or what is performing at a high level in these districts? Most of us would answer that it is the students who are to be high-performing. But this answer begs another question: Is that enough? After all, how do students become high-performing? It happens through the guidance and the support of the adults in their lives: parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and others. It happens through the curriculum and instruction that the teachers provide to the students: the learning experiences, the level of challenge and rigor, the teachers' expectations. Everyone and every process in the educational system must operate at the optimal levels of demand, consistency, and integrity for school districts to be high-performing.

With this broader view, we must expand the question of "What do students do to become high-performing?" to "What do school and district personnel do that leads to each student achieving at the highest level possible for him or her?" Fortunately, the answers are available through studies of the characteristics or components that occur in high-performing school districts. Numerous books and articles reveal that certain components of successful schools and districts repeatedly emerge in the literature (see online appendix). Although the wording varies from author to author, with some indicating six, seven, or eight components, the components are basically the same. For our purposes, we have compiled the results of the research into the eight components of high-performing, high-poverty districts:

1. **Vision, Goals, Mission**
    - Is focused on student learning
    - Includes a belief that all students can achieve to high expectations
    - Is widely accepted by teachers and administrators
2. **Leadership**
    - Is shared with teachers and staff through school leadership teams and other teams that have the authority to make meaningful decisions
    - Is focused on improving instruction to increase student learning
    - Occurs at the school and district levels
3. **Use of Data and Formative Assessments**
    - Is used by teachers on a daily or weekly basis to make instructional decisions
    - Enables analysis of student learning to determine additional supports needed
4. **Instruction**
    - Is research-based and/or based on best practices
    - Is engaging and cognitively demanding

- Is differentiated for individual and groups of students

5. Curriculum

- Is developed by teachers (bottom-up) through extensive discussions of teaching, learning, and underlying meaning of the state standards
- Is cohesive and coherent at school and district levels and is aligned to the state standards and within and across grade levels

6. Professional Development

- Is of extensive length (about 50 hours a year) (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009)
- Is sustained (same topic presented multiple times)
- Is content- and instruction-focused and classroom-based
- Is collaborative, occurring with partners and teams and includes coaching or mentoring

7. Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

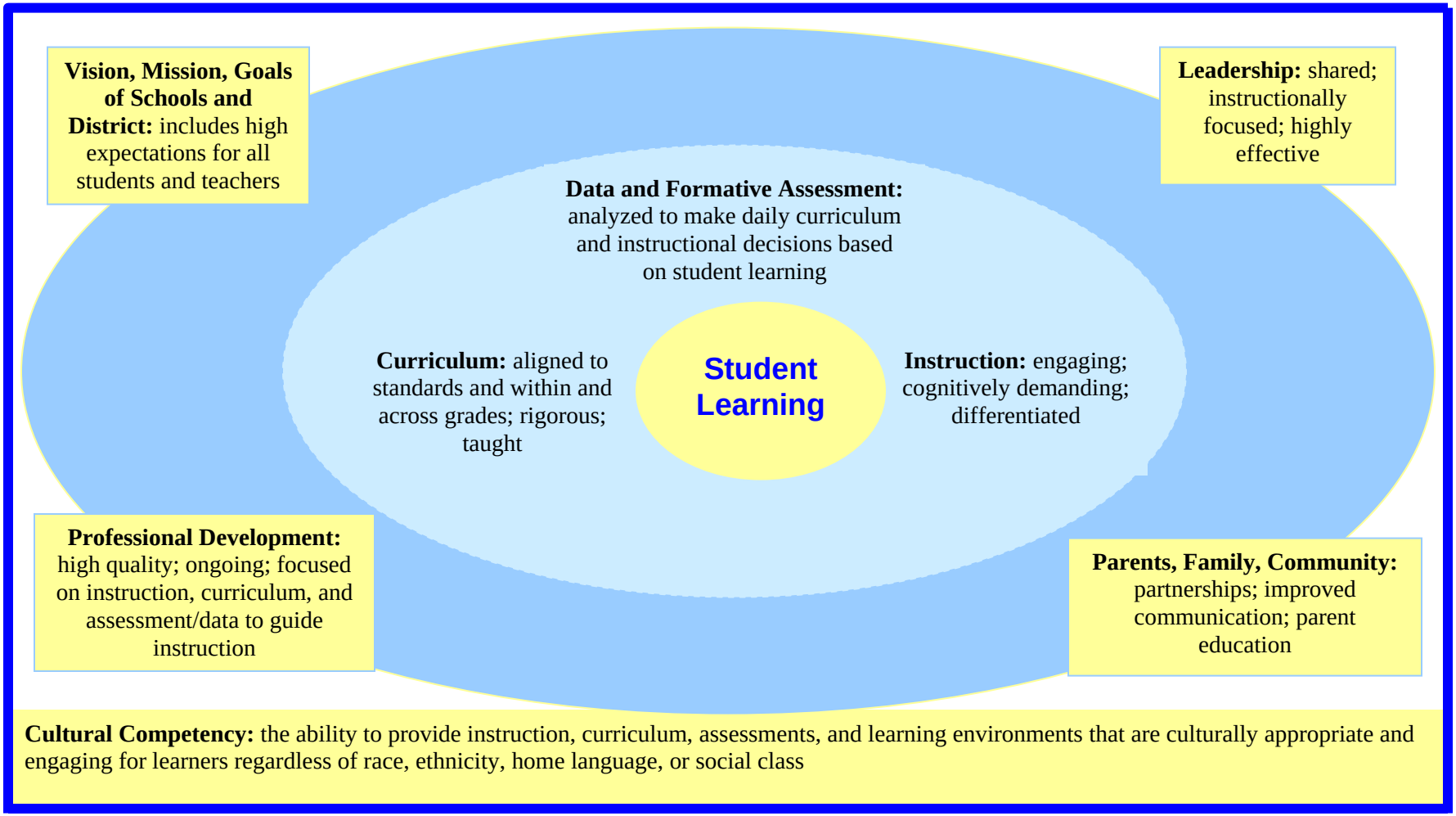
- Is active and inclusive with efforts to increase parents' comfort level in being involved with the school
- Is focused on developing parents' skills to support student learning

8. Culture Competency

- Is demonstrated in the district, schools, and classrooms with students, colleagues, parents, and the community interactions with one another
- Is the ability to provide instruction, curriculum, assessments, and learning environments that are culturally appropriate and engaging for learners regardless of their race, ethnicity, home language, or social class
- Results in the educator "having the skill and the will to demonstrate these behaviors:
  - Values the learner as a thinker and doer
  - Honors and respects cultural identities of all learners
  - Designs experiences that build on prior knowledge and experiences of the learners
  - Understands assessment bias
  - Holds high expectations for each learner
  - Presents rigorous, standards-based content
  - Selects materials and resources that reflect multicultural perspectives
  - Manages the dynamics of difference
  - Values diversity and inclusion" (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2006, p. 32–33)

Figure 1. IDOE, Title I: Theory of Action for Indiana High-Poverty School and Districts: Moving to High Performance

The IDOE, Office of Title I Academic Support holds a set of beliefs—described as a *theory of action*—based on the research and best practices of high-performing, high-poverty schools and districts. The components of the theory of action do not merely "exist" in high-performing schools. Rather, through the district's support, the components are of high quality and implemented with consistency and fidelity in all schools with special attention to academically-struggling student groups. In addition, assisting the IDOE, Office of Title I Academic Support provides supports to schools and districts in improvement that focus on the three components in the innermost circle of the theory of action: data and formative assessment, instruction, and curriculum.



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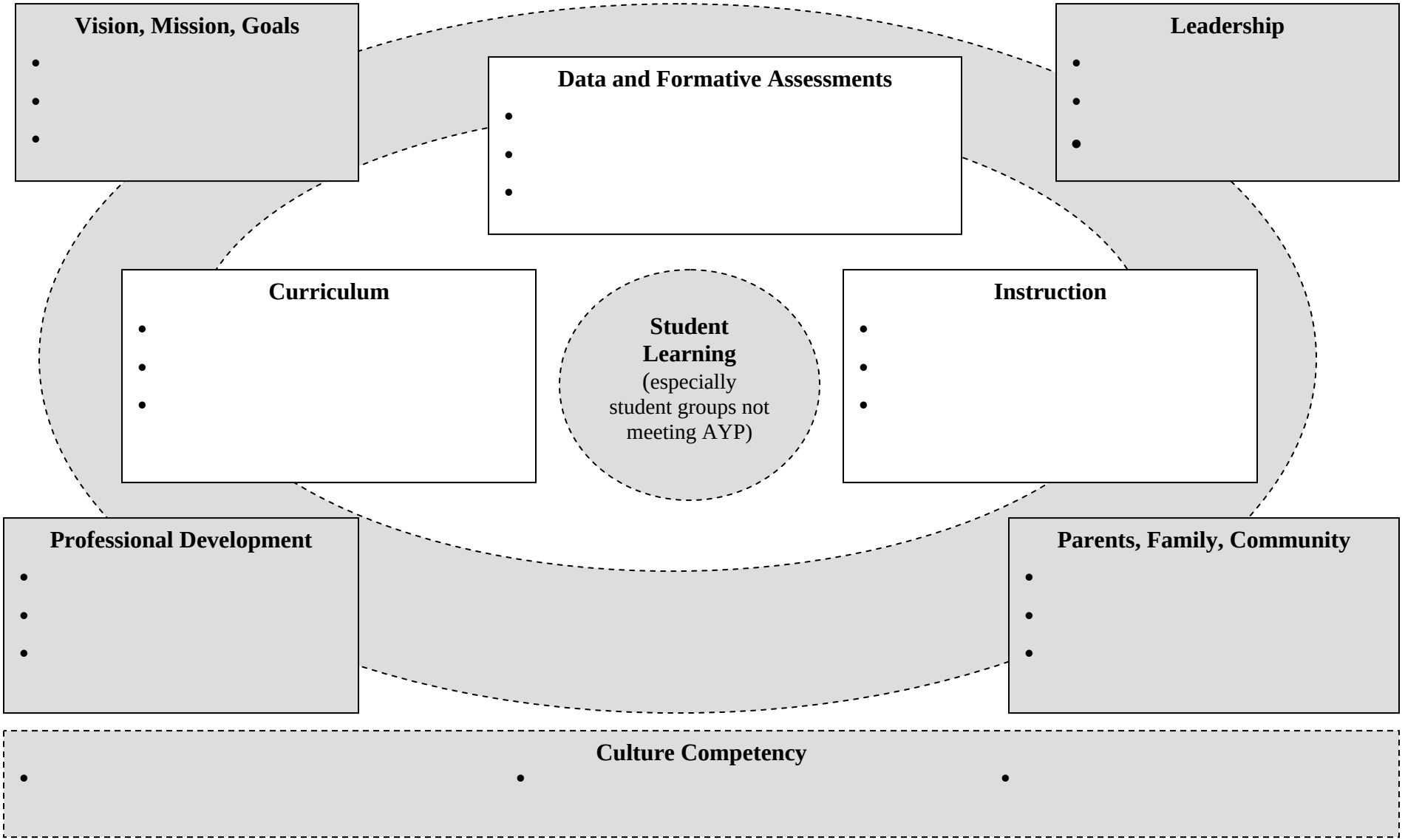
For additional references, see *Research and Literature Review: High-Poverty, High-Performing School Districts* in the online appendix.

Activity #3: How Does Our District Support Our Schools? Using the Theory of Action

➲ *Directions:*

1. Divide the components of high-performing, high-poverty districts among pairs of team members.
2. Using the Theory of Action as replicated in Figure 2 (page 12), list the ways that the district supports the schools for the selected component. For example, under "leadership," "Principals mentored monthly by experienced principals of successful high-poverty schools" could be written.
3. Write your answers on chart paper.
4. After all components and district supports are listed on chart paper, conduct a "Carousel Review." In pairs, team members rotate to each paper and add additional supports they are aware of that are provided by the district to the schools. Continue to rotate until all members have reviewed all papers.
5. As a group, address the following questions:
   a. In which areas do we quantitatively provide the most support to our schools?
   b. What evidence do we have that those supports are effective, defined here as "changing teachers' and principals' attitudes, skills, and behaviors"? On a scale of 1 to 5, what level of evidence do we have of the effectiveness of the support? (Place that number on the chart paper.)
   c. In which areas are we not providing the amount of support to schools that we should?
   d. How might this area correspond to the requirement of the LEA improvement plan to "include a determination of why the LEA's previous plan did not bring about increased student academic achievement?" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 47).
   e. Are there areas where perhaps too much "support" is being given, requiring teachers to implement many programs at once? If so, when developing the district improvement plan, consider removing those initiatives and focusing on the programs that have data to support their effectiveness.

Figure 2. Activity #3: How Does Our District Support Our Schools? Using the Theory of Action



Activity #4: How Does Our District Support Our Schools? Self-Assessment

In Activity #3, we considered the supports your district provides to your schools. Another way to examine those supports is through a self-assessment tool that describes the components of high-performing districts. The information gained from the self-assessment tool (see Table 4) will assist in developing the actions needed in the district improvement plan.

The self-assessment tool is a compilation of rubrics developed by several state departments of education and educational organizations. The components are given in stages or phases that represent a district's progress from beginning to high-performing stages. Additional sources of district and school self-assessments are listed in the online appendix.

➲ *Directions:*

1. In pairs, select a component and read the statements under it. Using the continuum of 1 to 5 (with 5 being a high-performing district), rate your district by circling the "X" in the appropriate column.
2. Ask "What evidence do we have that supports this rating?" Reconsider your rating if written or hard evidence is not available.
3. Share your answers with the whole group and highlight those areas with the lowest ratings. Return to this self-assessment tool when developing the action plan.

Table 4. Self-Assessment Tool: Components of High-Performing District

Component	Components Level 1—Beginning	Continuum 2	3	4	Components Level 5—High-Performing
1. Vision, Mission, Goals	X • Does not exist. • Is not current. • Teachers do not know it exists or do not believe what it espouses. • Is not related to student learning.	X	X	X	X • Developed by all staff within past few years. • Includes high expectations for all. • Includes all teachers being responsible for all students' learning.

2. Leadership	X • Principals spend most of their time managing the school. • Principals are rarely in classrooms. • Principals are not knowledgeable about E/LA or mathematics instruction. • District provides no support to principals regarding instruction.	X	X	X	X • Principals are highly knowledgeable of E/LA and mathematics instruction. • Principals conduct frequent walk-throughs. • Principals assist teachers in their instruction. • Principals share leadership task through teams, professional learning communities, etc.
Component	**Components** **Level 1—Beginning**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Components** **Level 5—High-Performing**
3. Data and Formative Assessments	X • Teachers rarely receive district data or receive it late. • Teachers and principals do not know how to disaggregate data for instructional purposes. • Teachers do not examine student work together. • Teachers do not use formative classroom assessments.	X	X	X	X • District/school is "data rich"—i.e., data are readily available and timely. • Teachers (not only data coaches) are capable of disaggregating data. • Teachers meet regularly in groups to discuss student work. • Teachers routinely use formative assessments to guide instruction.
4. Instruction	X • Instruction is primarily lecture- and teacher-centered. • Instruction places the same cognitive demands on all learners. • Instruction is primarily textbook-oriented and lacks student engagement. • Technology is rarely used by teachers and/or students. • Teachers do not meet in or across grade-level teams to discuss and improve their instruction.	X	X	X	X • Instruction includes a variety of methods that are student-centered. • Instruction provides various levels of cognitive demands to correspond to learners' experiences, abilities, and interests. • Textbooks are one of many supports; technology is used frequently to engage learners. • Teachers know how to alter instruction (differentiate) for struggling students. • Teachers meet regularly in groups to discuss their instructional practices.

5. Curriculum	X • Curriculum does not exist or is defined as state standards or pacing guides. • Teachers do not meet in or across grade levels teams to develop curriculum based on the state standards. • Students with special needs or who are learning English are not present in the regular classroom during core instruction time, and thus do not have access to the school curriculum. • Curriculum offers a one-culture view of the world.	X	X	X	X • Curriculum is developed by teachers based on determining the underlying meaning of the state standards. • Curriculum aligns within and across grade levels. • Curriculum is rigorous and cognitively demanding. • All students have access to the curriculum through adequate time in the regular classroom. • Teachers know how to alter the curriculum for struggling students • Curriculum includes viewpoints from various cultures.
Component	**Components** **Level 1—Beginning**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Components** **Level 5—High-Performing**
6. Professional Development	X • Is individually selected by each teacher; includes conferences and conventions. • Is not related to curriculum, instruction, or assessment. • Is short, i.e., one-shot sessions. • Does not include follow-up assistance, mentoring, or monitoring of classroom implementation.	X	X	X	X • Is developed long-term; focuses on improving curriculum, instruction, and formative assessments. • Includes multiple sessions, follow-up coaching, or mentoring in classroom. • Focuses on teachers developing appropriate instructional skills for struggling student group. • Includes accountability as principal monitors for quality and consistency of classroom implementation.
7. Parents, Families, and Communities	X • Focuses on parent–teacher meetings. • Does not provide assistance to parents in helping their children academically. • Does not provide unique experiences for parents of students who are struggling.	X	X	X	X • Sets aside specific times only for the parents of students who are not meeting AYP and those times are beyond what is required by law. • Assists parents in learning how to help their children academically. • Provides written translation and oral interpretation for parents who do not speak English.

Component	Components Level 1—Beginning	2	3	4	Components Level 5—High-Performing
8. Cultural Competency	X • Holds the belief that all students learn the same way, instructing all students similarly. • Uses the textbook to determine the focus of study. • "Cultural instruction" is limited to study of flags, festivals, and foods of nations. • Uses nicknames for learners whose names are difficult to pronounce. • Does not investigate students' level of education prior to coming to the United States; their home languages; or the political and economic history and conditions of their countries or groups. • Does not connect curriculum and learning to students' own life experiences as related to race, ethnicity, or social class.	X	X	X	X • Holds the belief that students learn differently and provides for by using various instructional practices. • Combines what learners need to know from the state standards and curriculum with the needs in their lives. • Provides culturally proficient instruction, allowing learners to explore cultural contexts of themselves and others. • Learns all students' names and works to pronounce them correctly. • Investigates students' education prior to coming to the United States; their home languages; and the political and economic history and conditions of their countries or groups. • Connects curriculum and learning to students' own life experiences as related to race, ethnicity or class.

Section III: Our Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments

From the data findings, we can determine which students are struggling, at what grade levels, with what disabilities or levels of English skills, and in which reading or mathematics standards. With this information, we turn to examining what our district is doing to support the students and those that teach them in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

Activity #5: Examining Our Curriculum: Do We Have One?

As defined by Bredenkamp and Rosegrant (1995), a *curriculum* is:

> An organized framework that delineates the **content** that children are to learn, the **processes** through which children achieve the identified curriculum **goals**, what **teachers do** to help children achieve these goals, and the **context** in which teaching and learning occur (p. 16; emphasis added).

To clarify the meaning further, Table 10 identifies what a curriculum is and what it is not.

Table 10. Characteristics of a Curriculum

A Curriculum:	**A Curriculum:**
• Is the "unpacking" or the interpreting of the state standards into a set of skills to be learned.	• Is not a copy of the state standards or indicators.
• Is a well-conceived hierarchy of skills based on students' cognitive, language, and social-emotional development.	• Is not a scope and sequence chart from a publisher, chapter headings from a textbook, or titles of stories.
• Is developed by all teachers working in collaborative grade-level and content-area teams.	• Is not developed by a few people in the school or district or by a publishing or textbook company.
• Is a planning and teaching tool that affects instruction and is adapted and differentiated to correspond to the needs and strengths of the learners.	• Is not a document that sits on a shelf and never changes.
• Includes content, skills, assessments, state standards, and other information that teachers use in their planning and teaching.	• Is not simply a restating of the state standards.
• Describes what the students need to know and be able to do.	• Is not a description of what the teacher will do (e.g., a lesson plan).
• Is aligned with the state standards and across and within grade levels and content areas with increasing cognitive difficulty at each level.	• Is not individually unique with each teacher developing his or her own interpretation of the standards and without agreement within or across grade levels.

◈ *Discussion*

1. Which, if any, of the statements are inconsistent with your thinking or what you have been taught in the past about curriculum?

2. If the teachers in your districts were to define the word "curriculum," would their answers adhere to the "is" or the "is not" side of the chart?

3. What are the implications for the curriculum in your district based on this definition of a curriculum?

4. Based on the chart, does your district have an English/language arts and/or mathematics curriculum that is:

- Aligned to the Indiana state standards?
- Used regularly by teachers to guide classroom instruction?
- Available to almost all students through access to the regular classroom? Carefully consider the amount of exposure students with disabilities and students learning English have to the grade-level curriculum.

Activity #6: The Essential Components of High-Quality Curriculum

For many of us, the curriculum we received on our first day of teaching was a teacher's manual and, perhaps, a scope and sequence chart. Today, a curriculum is much more than a teacher's manual, student textbook, or pacing guide.

With the enactment of NCLB, state departments of education developed academic standards and standardized achievement tests. Some SEAs developed state curriculum as a third element. In Indiana, the department of education entrusted the designing and implementing of standards-based and aligned curriculum to individual districts and schools.

To assist districts and their schools in this endeavor, IDOE Title I reviewed the research and best practices regarding the components of high-quality curriculum. Five components emerged as foundational or essential: content, corresponding state standards, skills, formative assessments, and time frame. These components are required in the newly designed English/language arts or mathematics curriculum of districts in corrective action. Some districts may find additional components to be useful and are welcome to include those in the curriculum as well.

Essential Components of High-Quality Curriculum

1. **Content**
    - The subject matter or topic to be introduced; may emerge from classroom monthly themes/topics or six-week projects.
    - Stated as a noun or noun phrase.
    - Examples: "Persuasive letter," "Analogies," "Subtraction, whole numbers," "Rational numbers."
2. **State Standard**
    - The state standard that corresponds to the content.
3. **Skills**
    - What the learner must be able to know or do (as related to the state standard).
    - Stated using action verbs.
    - Is the most critical component of the curriculum.
    - Developed by teacher groups discussing and determining the underlying meaning and specifics of the state standard
    - Example: Persuasive letter: "Uses a teacher-provided stem (e.g., "I know that you like …") to connect to reader's interest in the topic.
4. **Formative Assessment**
    - Describes how the skill will be measured to determine level of student learning.
    - Conducted on daily or weekly basis.

- Includes teacher-developed observations, rubrics, interviews, and quizzes with descriptions or details of each provided.
- May be commercially produced formative assessments such as Wireless Generation or Acuity.

5. **Time Frame**
   - The week(s), month(s), grading periods that teaching and learning occurs.

Additional Curriculum Components

In addition to the five required curriculum components described above, some educators find additional components to be useful. However, experience shows that developing fewer components reduces the complexity of the mapping task. The components below might be added to later drafts of the curriculum.

6. **Essential Questions**
   - An overarching question from the student's point of view that demonstrates the value and purposes of learning for the student.
   - Example: "Why is it important to consider the audience and their needs in writing requests, thank yous and invitations?"
7. **Activities**
   - Description of the key exercises that all teachers use with the students.
8. **Resources**
   - Key materials that all teachers agree to use, such as website links, titles of videos, section titles from textbooks, and page numbers.
   - Teachers may add additional personal sources in their lesson plans.
9. **Modifications and Accommodations**
   - Modifications—A modification changes what a student is expected to learn to allow the student to participate meaningfully with other students. Examples are: an outline as the assignment in place of an essay; choosing from a word bank of choices for answers; or use of an alternative book on the same topic as the other students.
   - Accommodations—An accommodation does not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. Examples are: taking a test orally (rather than written), having a large-print textbook, or a having additional time to take the test.

Activity #7: Curriculum Self-Assessment—How Does Our Curriculum Measure Up?

Most teachers and administrators report that "Yes, we have a curriculum." But what is the quality of that curriculum? Was the curriculum developed by all teachers? Is it aligned to the standards and across grade levels? Have the skills that all teachers will teach been agreed upon?

Districts in corrective action use the tool below to determine the quality of their English/ language arts or mathematics curriculum. IDOE Title I repeats the process and compares the two results. The assessment criteria are the existence and quality of the five essential components from the curriculum at Grades 3, 8, and 10.

➲ *Directions:*

Assess Grades 3, 8, and 10 of the district curriculum by rating the components as follows:

1—the component is missing or does not correspond to the descriptors

2—the component is present and includes some of the descriptors

3—the component includes all of the descriptors

Table 11. Self-Assessment of Curriculum

Our curriculum includes the following components	**Grade 3**			**Grade 8**			**Grade 10**		
1. Content • Subject matter or topic to be introduced; emerges from monthly themes/topics or six-week projects • Stated as a noun or noun phrase	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
2. State Standard • The state standard that corresponds to the content.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
3. Skills • What the learner must be able to know or do (as related to the state standard) • Stated using action verbs • Developed by teacher groups discussing and deciding the underlying meaning of the state standard	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
4. Formative Assessment • Describes how the skill will be measured to determine level of student learning • Conducted on daily or weekly basis	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
5. Time Frame • The week(s), month(s), grading periods that teaching and learning occurs	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Our E/LA or mathematics curriculum is of high quality with well-developed required components. ____ Yes ____ No									

Activity #8: Why Is a Curriculum Important?

➢ *Directions:* Read the story below and answer the questions.

The door hit the wall hard as the twins burst into the house. "Mom, we got our report cards today!" they shouted. Sharing in her second-graders' excitement, Mom quickly opens the cards. But something is wrong. Lucy, who is the stronger writer of the two, received a checkmark under "Needs significant improvement." Luke, on the other hand, received "Mastered." Mom carefully reads the state standard alongside the checkmarks: "Writes a brief description of a familiar object, person, place, or event that: (a) develops a main idea and (b) uses details to support the main idea" (Indiana standard 2.5.2). Baffled by the results, Mom makes appointments to meet with the twins' teachers the next day.

◈ *Discussion:* What are some possible reasons that Luke received a higher mark on this standard than his sister?

During the conference, both teachers provide examples of the children's homework, simple book reports, and reading diaries that were used to determine their grades. Both teachers also share a checklist or rubric they use to grade the student work for this standard, as shown in Table 12:

Table 12. Checklist for Grading Student Work

Luke's Teacher: Checklist	**Lucy's Teacher: Checklist**
1. Copies the main idea from the reading.	1. Writes original sentence presenting the main idea.
2. Rewrites two details from the reading.	2. Presents three or more details in own words.
	3. During the six-week period, writes a total of eight descriptions.
	4. Uses capital letters to begin sentences and punctuation at the end of sentences.

◈ *Discussion:* Based on the checklists, what is a probable reason that Luke received a higher mark on this standard than his sister?

The two teachers have very different expectations, even though both teach second grade. Each teacher interpreted the state writing standard differently, with Lucy's teacher having much higher expectations of her students than Luke's teacher.

◈ *Discussion:*

1. Do you think that teachers in your school/district interpret the standards identically or differently?

2. What evidence do you have to support your opinion?

This is not an uncommon occurrence within grade levels in the same school and certainly across schools in the same district. When teachers do not meet together to interpret the meaning or skills underlying a standard, each teacher interprets the standard differently, including what it looks like when students have a basic knowledge versus mastery of the standard.

◈ *Discussion:*

1. How does the district support teachers, principals, and schools in designing a curriculum as described above?

2. What evidence exists that the curriculum is implemented consistently by all teachers?

Research and Literature Review: How Does Curriculum Affect Student Learning?

> "In the array of factors that define high-performing schools, curriculum alignment enjoys a position of exceptional prominence" (Murphy, 2007, p. 75).

What is known about curriculum and its impact on student learning? Both research and expert opinion state that a rigorous, standards-based, grade- and content-level-aligned curriculum is one of the key components of high-performing schools. An aligned and coherent curriculum is routinely listed in the literature as one of several characteristics of high-performing schools.

In one study, teachers and administrators from 50 school districts ranked *curriculum alignment* as the number one practice that led to increased student achievement (Kercheval, 2001). In a large-scale survey of almost 3,000 teachers and principals in California, "implementing a *coherent, standards-based curriculum* and instructional program" was selected as second in a list of practices associated with high levels of student achievement (EdSource, 2006, p. 2; emphasis added) with attention to student learning being the number one response.

The importance of curriculum emerged in a 2006 report of 70 districts that applied for the Broad Prize, an award given to urban school districts that "significantly improve student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between low- and high-income students" (Zavadsky, 2006, p. 69–70). All five finalists indicated that their success in part belonged to developing and implementing curricula that were detailed and properly sequenced, aligned between grades and across all schools, developed by classroom teachers and curriculum specialists from schools and district offices, and which often included higher expectations than the state standards.

In addition to the research, educational scholars write of the importance of the high-quality curriculum. A *guaranteed and viable curriculum* receives a ranking of first of 15 school-level factors that impact student achievement in Marzano's (2003) review of the research. Educational scholar Herbert J. Walberg (2007) encourages those in charge of restructuring schools "*to align instruction with state standards*" (p. 87; emphasis added) as the first in a list of 10 principles to improve achievement.

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How a Curriculum Is Developed: The Mapping and Aligning Process

How does a district or school begin to design or develop a new curriculum? The answer is through mapping and aligning the curriculum—a process utilized by educators nationally and internationally.

What Is "Mapping the Curriculum?"

In mapping the curriculum, teachers and administrators work in groups to design the curriculum that is to be taught and learned. At the core of the process is the "unpacking" of the state standards or, put another way, the pealing away of the standard to expose the underlying explicit and implicit skills.

For example, a group of third-grade teachers begin to discuss the skills underlying the standard: "3.3.7 Compare and contrast versions of the same stories from different cultures." As the teachers unpack the standard, they realize that their students must have prior knowledge of other cultures, languages, and geography in order to compare and contrast the vocabulary, plot, setting, characters, and problems and solutions of two stories. The teachers list 15 subskills embedded in this one standard. The teachers then create a curriculum map, including the five essential components, agreeing upon what and when the subskills will be taught and assessed throughout the school year.

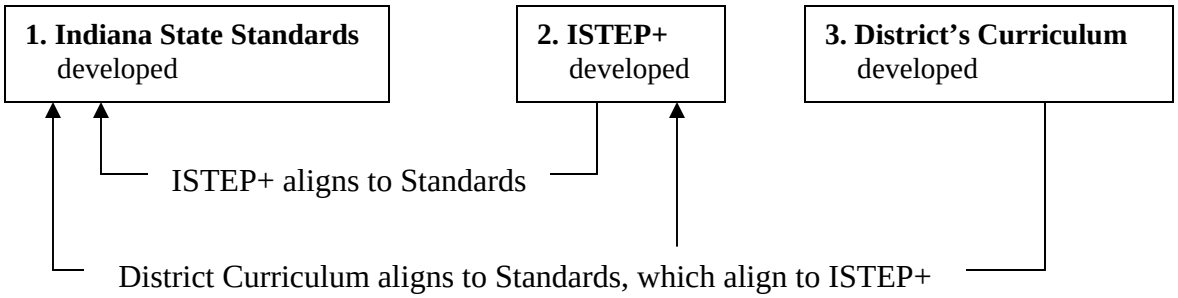
What Is "Aligning the Curriculum?"

Working in groups, grade-level and content-area teachers map the curriculum as described above. At the next level of mapping, teacher groups align the curriculum. A useful metaphor for curriculum alignment is the aligning of tires on a car. After a Midwest winter of snow, ice, and subzero temperatures, rough roads and potholes often require a trip to the mechanic. Without correct tire alignment, a car is difficult to steer, tending to veer from one side to the other creating a rough ride for the passengers—uneven and uncomfortable. In the same way, a curriculum that is uncoordinated and unplanned creates a rough and inconsistent "ride" for the learner. Teachers must ensure that what they teach is aligned with the subskills taught by other teachers at their grade levels and in their content areas, and aligned from one grade to the next with an increase in cognitive demand occurring at each grade level.

Without such an alignment, students face several challenges. First, they are unprepared for the next grade level because they did not gain the skills that next year's teacher expects them to have mastered. Second, the demand or the level of the skill does not increase, resulting in uninterested and unmotivated students who are forced to "learn" the same information, year after year.

Finally, the curriculum needs to align to the state standards. A curriculum aligned to the standards inherently is aligned to Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress–Plus (ISTEP+) (see Figure 3), eliminating the misguided belief that educators must "teach to the test."

Figure 3. Alignment of State Standards, ISTEP+, and District Curriculum



What Needs to Be in Place Before We Begin?

As with any new project or initiative, curriculum mapping and aligning will require time—time for teachers and principals to work alone and with others. Designing the curriculum through mapping is a two- to three-year process. In addition, mapping the curriculum requires a willingness on the part of teachers to openly share their instructional practices with one another. Many teachers are unaccustomed to sharing what and how they are teaching behind their closed doors. School and district leadership will need to ensure that a culture is created that reflects collegiality through establishing strong team-based approaches such as professional learning teams.

What Is the Most Important Part of the Mapping Process?

The answer is simple: the discussions held by teachers and administrators are the most important part of developing a curriculum. Although the process of writing and filling in charts or maps of what is taught can easily become the focal point, it should not be so. It is as teachers meet in grade level and content area teams to reach consensus that the real work is done. Not since college have most teachers held such professional, student-focused conversations.

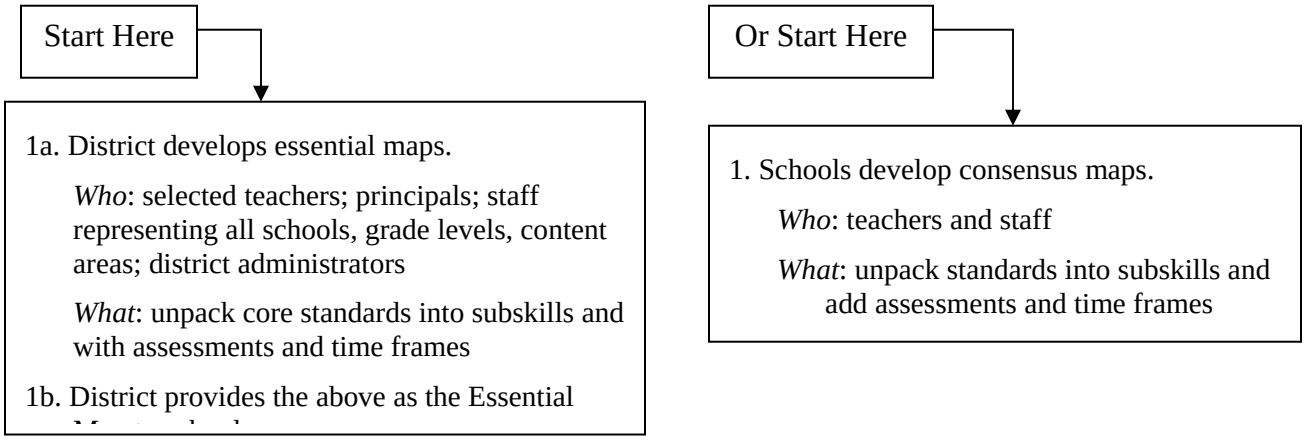
What Are the Different Kinds of Maps, and Which Ones Are We to Develop?

Maps may be developed by the district, the school, groups of teachers, or individual teachers. The IDOE, Title I requirement is for all English/language arts or mathematics teachers to participate in developing the curriculum maps. The mapping and aligning is to occur at the school level, although larger districts may first develop a "core" map similar to the core standards, which is called the *district essential map.* At the school level, groups of teachers work together to create the *school consensus map.*

- **District Essential Map**
  - Created by groups of teachers and administrators to determine the essential or "core" subskills of the standards (or core standards) to be taught, learned, and assessed.
  - From these, the schools develop their consensus maps.

- **School Consensus Maps**
  - Created by groups of teachers as they unpack the standards.
  - Initially meet in grade-level or content-area groups; later share and improve maps in cross-grade-level and cross-content-area teams.
  - Describes the agreed upon skills to be taught, learned, and assessed.

Where Do We Start?



How a Curriculum Is Developed: The Steps

Heidi Hayes Jacobs (1997), a national curriculum expert, developed a seven-step process for mapping and aligning the curriculum. Schools and districts around the world use this process. For Indiana districts in corrective action, these steps serve as guidelines. Before attempting to implement the steps, district staff should attend workshops and study curriculum mapping books.

Step 1: Collect the Data

- Create maps of what has been taught or what will be taught.
- Begin unpacking the standards, delineating the skills needed to achieve mastery of the standard.
- Consider a standard in terms of its underlying explicit or implicit conceptual understandings, prior knowledge requirements, content knowledge, and cognitive processes (e.g., evaluating, synthesizing, comparing).

Step 2: Read-Through of Group's Maps

- Share and read one another's maps.
- Improve the consistency and quality of the maps through collegial critique; note findings.
- Continue to map, based on feedback received from others.

Step 3: Mixed Small-Group Review to Share Findings

- Meet in groups across grade levels or content areas.
- Continue unpacking standards and noting findings.

Step 4: Large-Group Review of All Findings

- Bring all findings together from smaller groups.
- Collegially and cooperatively discuss findings in terms of gaps, redundancies, consistency, timeliness, and increased cognitive demand.

Step 5: Make Immediate Revisions

- Reach solutions for those findings that allow for quick and mutual agreement.

Step 6: Long-Term Planning for Changes

- Research, study, and investigate the more difficult findings.
- Design a plan of action for resolving the difficult challenges or changes in the curriculum.

Step 7: Continue the Cycle

Reference: Hayes Jacobs, H. (1997). *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment, K–12.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Section IV: Creating the Curriculum Development and Implementation Action Plan

To assist districts in leading their schools in developing an English/language arts or mathematics curriculum, IDOE Title I created a number of tools. Some of the tools are identical to the activities your team completed in the previous section, others are presented in this section, and still others are available only in "Tools for Designing Curriculum Through Mapping and Aligning." The Tools are available on the IDOE, Title I website under "District Improvement."

Taking time to plan the process of designing a new curriculum is critical. Most authors suggest six to 12 months to complete the preplanning task. However, due to the urgency of improving student learning for districts in corrective action, IDOE Title I expects the preplanning process to be completed within six months of the March workshop (by the end of September). The following resources provide the specific steps in preparing to map and align the curriculum:

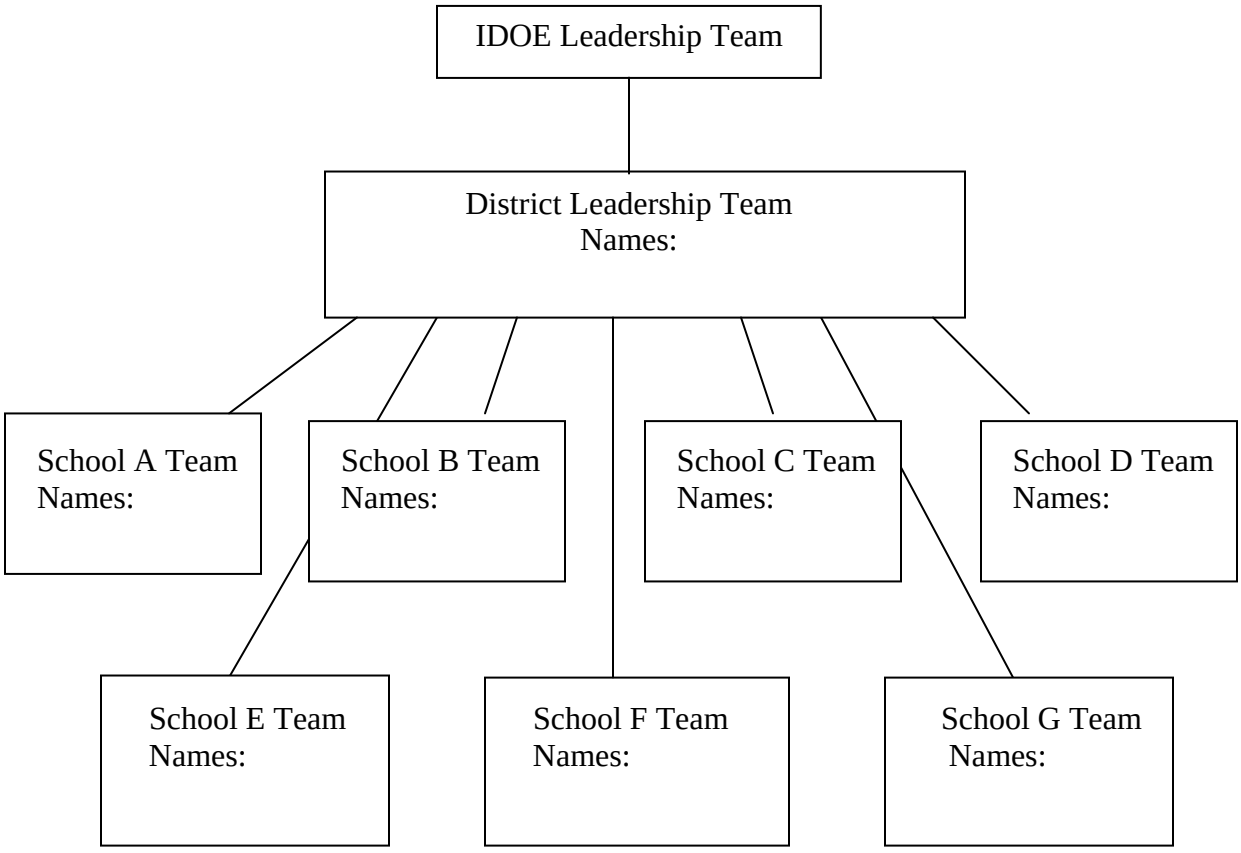
- Getting Ready: Create a Leadership Team and Organizational Structure
- Getting Ready: Interview and Hire a Consultant
- Getting Ready: Select a Software Program for Mapping

Getting Ready: Establish a Leadership Team and an Organizational Structure

The first step in preplanning to map and align the curriculum is to create a structure within the district and schools that allows for organizing, communicating, and implementing the work. A sample team organizational structure is shown in Figure 4. Districts are required to submit their organizational chart to IDOE, Title I within six months.

Teams at each school and at the district level serve as communication links, decision-makers, first adopters of the process, and trainers. Having a solid team that meets often and communicates well increases the level of teacher participation and consistency across the schools.

Figure 4. Organizational Structure (sample)



Getting Ready: Interview and Hire a Consultant

Mapping software companies often indicate that they can provide all the needed professional development for the district and schools. However, IDOE Title I has seen that this is not always the case; additional training beyond the software mapping companies is often needed. Thus, IDOE, Title I requires all districts to use a curriculum mapping consultant either internally or externally. When interviewing the consultants, the district should consider the skills and experiences of the interviewee, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Interviewing and Hiring a Consultant

The Consultant Has Experience With and Is Able to Assist Us In …	**Consultant 1**	**Consultant 2**	**Consultant 3**
1. Reworking schedules to find time for teachers to work together.			
2. Creating an organizational structure for mapping.			
3. Developing a culture of working collaboratively and sharing and critiquing maps.			
4. Creating a map of the implementation plan.			
5. Instructing teachers in the five required components, and especially in how to unpack the standards.			
6. Providing this number of days/hours of training: __ on the theory, benefits, processes of curriculum mapping. __ on unpacking the standards (including practice). __ on reviewing other's maps (including practice).			
7. Developing consensus maps within and across grade levels and content areas.			
8. Using the online mapping system selected, including the summaries and reports.			
Consultant's Experience and Dispositions to Consider	**Consultant 1**	**Consultant 2**	**Consultant 3**
1. Has been a teacher or administrator within the past few years.			
2. Understands the requirements for schools and districts in improvement status under NCLB.			
3. Communicates well; adapts the training to the experience and needs of teachers; provides support, encouragement, and problem solving.			
4. Has worked extensively with IDOE state standards.			
Consultant's Fee/Daily Rate	**Consultant 1**	**Consultant 2**	**Consultant 3**
Consultant's fee or daily rate.			

Getting Ready: Select a Software Program for Mapping

Ten years ago, teachers mapped their curriculum on large pieces of paper with columns for months, content, skills, and assessments. The papers were posted in the halls or in the faculty lounge, and teachers spent professional development days comparing and contrasting their maps to eventually create a large mural of a consensus map.

Today, computer software programs include templates for entering the map components and include searching and reporting features. Although these features expedite the entering of data, the most important factor still remains the conversations and discussions held between teachers.

IDOE Title I has studied the computer software programs and offers four for districts to review. It is the district's responsibility to contact each company, meet with them, and pilot their systems for several weeks before deciding which one to purchase.

IDOE Title I Preferred Software Programs for Mapping

Atlas Curriculum Management System
Website: www.rubicon.com/AtlasCurriculumMapping.html
Address: One World Trade Center, Suite 1200, 121 SW Salmon St., Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 1-800-971-4200

Build Your Own Curriculum
Website: www.schoolsoftwaregroup.com
Address: School Software Group, 61 N. Meadow Row Court, Appleton, WI 54913
Phone: 1-800-596-0735
E-mail: ctrina@schoolsoftwaregroup.com

Curriculum Mapper
Website: www.clihome.com
Address: Collaborative Learning, 1S660 Midwest Rd., Ste. 310, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
Phone: 1-800-318-4555
Email: info@clihome.com

TechPaths—A Curriculum Mapping System
Website: www.perfpathways.com
Address: Performance Pathways, 5010 Ritter Rd., Ste. 119, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Phone: 866-457-1990
Email: info@perfpathways.com

Other providers may be suggested to IDOE, who then will investigate their products and review examples of their work to determine their acceptance as preferred providers

Table 14. Criteria to Consider in Selecting a Software Program

The Program/System	**Company 1**	**Company 2**	**Company 3**
1. Provides columns for the five essential components in a horizontal table, on a single page with a full text of the standards (not links to standards).			
2. Has Indiana state standards fully loaded for teachers to cut and paste into their maps.			
3. Allows for consensus map and essential maps.			
4. Allows teachers to view one another's maps.			
5. Allows for recording of maps by various time frames: months, weeks, or grading periods.			
6. Searches and sorts by words or phrases, courses, grade levels, or standards to create a variety of reports with accompanying graphs and visuals.			
7. Includes spell-check and the ability to change fonts, bold, underline, etc.			
8. Is simple enough for novice users of computers.			
The Company	**Company 1**	**Company 2**	**Company 3**
1. Assists in developing an implementation plan.			
2. Assists in finding ways for teachers to find time to work together.			
3. Is well experienced with providing professional development around the five required components.			
4. Provides this number of days/hours of training: ____ about the software (including practice) ____ on the theory, benefits, and processes of mapping ____ on unpacking the standards (including practice) ____ on reviewing of other's maps (including practice)			
5. Costs: a. License per user b. Professional development c. Other			

Mapping and Aligning Tasks: The First Six Months

Use Table 15 to create a timeline for the first six months. Indicate when each task will be completed and who will take the lead. At the end of six months from the March workshop, submit the timeline to IDOE, Title I, indicating on the chart those tasks completed.

Table 15. Mapping and Aligning Tasks: The First Six Months

Tasks Planned and Completed	Lead Person(s)	Beginning Date	Completion Date
1. Attended IDOE-sponsored mapping workshops with leadership and teams.			
2. Gained information about mapping through book studies, courses, videos, and other sources.			
3. Interviewed and hired a mapping consultant.			
4. Experimented with and purchased a software program.			
5. Created an organizational structure with school teams having representatives from all grade levels and content areas.			
6. Provided job descriptions for teams and developed an efficient communication system among the district, school, and classrooms for implementing mapping.			
7. Provided ongoing, in-depth training for leadership and school teams.			
8. Integrated the mapping process into the district improvement plan.			
9. Included and informed stakeholders of the mapping initiative: teachers; school and district administrators; school board; parents; union; and professional organizations.			
10. Completed and submitted the "Tasks: The First Six-Months" worksheet to IDOE, Title I.			

Mapping and Aligning Tasks: The First Year

Use Table 16 to create a timeline of when the tasks will occur and who will take the lead.

Table 16. Mapping and Aligning Tasks: The First Year

Phase I: Tasks Planned and Completed	Lead Person(s)	Beginning Date	Completion Date
1. All teachers received multiple training sessions about the mapping process and using the mapping software.			
2. Ongoing training was differentiated and/or accommodations were made for teachers with limited experience with technology.			
3. Teachers reached common understandings of mapping vocabulary and practiced through multiple sessions in entering the five essential components on the maps.			
4. Teachers received ample and sufficient professional time to create maps.			
5. Leadership team members were available to address teachers' questions as they began to map.			
6. The process included ongoing ways to measure and improve the quality of the maps.			
7. The focus of the mapping process was the discussions held by teachers in unpacking the standards into subskills.			

Phase II: Tasks Planned and Completed	Lead Person(s)	Beginning Date	Completion Date
1. Grade-level and content-areas teams read and wrote multiple drafts of own maps and offered ways to improve them.			
2. Cross-grade-level and cross-content-areas groups reviewed maps and noted repetitions, gaps, and lack of increased cognitive difficulty.			
3. The large group reviewed findings from cross-grade-level and content-areas groups.			
4. The large group made immediate changes in maps if consensus could easily be reached.			
5. When consensus could not be reached, the large group researched and investigated further to gain new information that would allow for consensus.			
6. All teachers actively participated in grade-level and content-area team mapping sessions.			
7. Teams may have begun mapping only some components, but within a few months, they included all required components.			
8. Team maps included adequate level of detail and are honest representations of the taught curriculum.			
9. The following have been sent to IDOE Title I: a. Mapping and Aligning Tasks Phase I & Phase II worksheets. b. Access codes/information for all online maps.			

Requirements for Districts in Corrective Action: Designing a New Curriculum

1. If the district is not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English/language arts and mathematics, the district will first map and align the English/language arts curriculum.
2. The district will hire a curriculum mapping consultant, either internal or external. The consultant will provide numerous days of assistance to the district throughout the school year.
3. The district will use a mapping software program from the preferred vendor list. (If the district wishes to suggest an additional company, IDOE will investigate its products and review examples of its work to determine its acceptance as a preferred provider.)
4. The preplanning process will require about six months, after which time the teachers will begin to map in teams using the mapping software program.
5. The district's maps will show all five essential components in a table on a single screen including the state standard (preferably not a link to the standard).
6. The district will send a team to IDOE-sponsored workshops on mapping and aligning the curriculum. The team may consist of the superintendent, principals, teachers, and curriculum and Title I directors, as well as staff who represent the student subgroups that did not meet AYP.
7. The district will demonstrate that significant and sufficient professional development time is dedicated to curriculum mapping.
8. The district is responsible for ensuring that each school has developed by the end of two years a consensus E/LA or mathematics map that is of high quality and maintains the fidelity of the seven-step mapping process.
9. The district will require and monitor all K–12 English/language arts or mathematics teachers to ensure active participation in individual and group assignments and meetings towards developing a school consensus map.
10. The district will make their online maps available to IDOE, Title I.